

These compacts, which have already been ratified by the affected States and provinces, require the consent of Congress to take effect under the Compacts clause of the Constitution.

This particular bill has bipartisan support of members of the other body and from States participating in these compacts. They were passed by unanimous consent in the Senate. I am not aware of any opposition to this bill.

The need for a coordinated response to fires and other emergencies is clear. I want to commend the participating States and provinces for their effort to protect human lives and property, and to safeguard the environment in this region. We need to have continued cooperation between bordering areas. I commend those who are involved in this, and I urge adoption of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take some time to pay tribute here to another colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DOC HASTINGS), who, in his endeavors over the course of time in the last session and before, has come to us time and time again to press for not just this compact, but another one that we will be taking up as the next order of business.

He has worked tirelessly in this regard, and because of his perseverance, has helped to solve some serious problems in his region of the world.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Senate Joint Resolution 35, a joint resolution granting the consent of Congress to the Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement. A compact entered into by the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, as well as the Province of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, these state and provincial governments have negotiated this compact to coordinate regional responses to natural disasters. As we all know, disasters do not respect state or national boundaries. To plan for and respond to these events, these northwest states and provinces have chosen to adopt a cooperative regional approach. This will improve the allocation of material, personnel, and services to mobilize as many resources as possible in the event of a natural disaster. Furthermore, the compact allows for cooperation across state and national borders without sacrificing the state or national sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, this regional effort is non-controversial and was passed unanimously by the other body on July 31 of this year. The compact is a local and regional effort that requires the consent of Congress to take effect.

I urge my colleagues to support the efforts of these northwest states and provinces to improve emergency preparedness and pass this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 35.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof), the rules were suspended and the Senate joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF BILLS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER SUSPENSION OF THE RULES ON TODAY

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House resolution 589, I hereby give notice that the following suspensions will be considered today:

H.R. 4572, to clarify that governmental pension plans of the possessions of the United States shall be treated in the same manner as State pension plans for purposes of the limitation on the State income taxation of pension income;

H.R. 4831, to temporarily reenact chapter 12 of title 11 of the United States Code;

S. 417, Energy Conservation Reauthorization Act;

H.R. 4660, to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act 1956 to provide rewards for information leading to the arrest or conviction of any individual for the commission of an act, or conspiracy to act, of international terrorism, narcotics-related offenses, or for serious violations of international humanitarian law relating to the former Yugoslavia.

#### GRANTING CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF CONGRESS TO AN INTERSTATE FOREST FIRE PROTECTION COMPACT

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1134) granting the consent and approval of Congress to an interstate forest fire protection compact.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1134

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. CONSENT OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The consent and approval of Congress is given to an interstate forest fire protection compact, as set out in subsection (b).

(b) COMPACT.—The compact reads substantially as follows:

#### "THE NORTHWEST WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENT

"THIS AGREEMENT is entered into by and between the State, Provincial, and Territorial wildland fire protection agencies signatory hereto, hereinafter referred to as "Members".

"FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF the following terms and conditions, the Members agree:

#### "Article I

"1.1 The purpose of this Agreement is to promote effective prevention, suppression and control of forest fires in the Northwest wildland region of the United States and adjacent areas of Canada (by the Members) by providing mutual aid in prevention, suppression and control of wildland fires, and by establishing procedures in operating plans that will facilitate such aid.

#### "Article II

"2.1 The agreement shall become effective for those Members ratifying it whenever any two or more Members, the States of Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, or the Yukon Territory, or the Province of British Columbia, or the Province of Alberta have ratified it.

"2.2 Any State, Province, or Territory not mentioned in this Article which is contiguous to any Member may become a party to this Agreement subject to unanimous approval of the Members.

#### "Article III

"3.1 The role of the Members is to determine from time to time such methods, practices, circumstances and conditions as may be found for enhancing the prevention, suppression, and control of forest fires in the area comprising the Member's territory; to coordinate the plans and the work of the appropriate agencies of the Members; and to coordinate the rendering of aid by the Members to each other in fighting wildland fires.

"3.2 The Members may develop cooperative operating plans for the programs covered by this Agreement. Operating plans shall include definition of terms, fiscal procedures, personnel contacts, resources available, and standards applicable to the program. Other sections may be added as necessary.

#### "Article IV

"4.1 A majority of Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its general business. Motions of Members present shall be carried by a simple majority except as stated in Article II. Each Member will have one vote on motions brought before them.

#### "Article V

"5.1 Whenever a Member requests aid from any other Member in controlling or preventing wildland fires, the Members agree, to the extent they possibly can, to render all possible aid.

#### "Article VI

"6.1 Whenever the forces of any Member are aiding another Member under this Agreement, the employees of such Member shall operate under the direction of the officers of the Member to which they are rendering aid and be considered agents of the Member they are rendering aid to and, therefore, have the same privileges and immunities as comparable employees of the Member to which they are rendering aid.

"6.2 No Member or its officers or employees rendering aid within another State, Territory, or Province, pursuant to this Agreement shall be liable on account of any act or omission on the part of such forces while so engaged, or on account of the maintenance or use of any equipment or supplies in connection therewith to the extent authorized by the laws of the Member receiving the assistance. The receiving Member, to the extent authorized by the laws of the State, Territory, or Province, agrees to indemnify and save-harmless the assisting Member from any such liability.

"6.3 Any Member rendering outside aid pursuant to this Agreement shall be reimbursed by the Member receiving such aid for any loss or damage to, or expense incurred in the operation of any equipment and for the cost of all materials, transportation, wages, salaries and maintenance of personnel and equipment incurred in connection with such request in accordance with the provisions of the previous section. Nothing contained herein shall prevent any assisting Member from assuming such loss, damage, expense or other cost or from loaning such equipment or from donating such services to the receiving Member without charge or cost.

"6.4 For purposes of the Agreement, personnel shall be considered employees of each sending Member for the payment of compensation to injured employees and death benefits to the representatives of deceased employees injured or killed while rendering aid to another Member pursuant to this Agreement.

"6.5 The Members shall formulate procedures for claims and reimbursement under the provisions of this Article.

#### "Article VII

"7.1 When appropriations for support of this agreement, or for the support of common services in executing this agreement, are needed, costs will be allocated equally among the Members.

"7.2 As necessary, Members shall keep accurate books of account, showing in full, its receipts and disbursements, and the books of account shall be open at any reasonable time to the inspection of representatives of the Members.

"7.3 The Members may accept any and all donations, gifts, and grants of money, equipment, supplies, materials and services from the Federal or any local government, or any agency thereof and from any person, firm or corporation, for any of its purposes and functions under this Agreement, and may receive and use the same subject to the terms, conditions, and regulations governing such donations, gifts, and grants.

#### "Article VIII

"8.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to limit or restrict the powers of any Member to provide for the prevention, control, and extinguishment of wildland fires or to prohibit the enactment of enforcement of State, Territorial, or Provincial laws, rules or regulations intended to aid in such prevention, control and extinguishment of wildland fires in such State, Territory, or Province.

"8.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to affect any existing or future Cooperative Agreement between Members and/or their respective Federal agencies.

#### "Article IX

"9.1 The Members may request the United States Forest Service to act as the coordinating agency of the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement in cooperation with the appropriate agencies for each Member.

"9.2 The Members will hold an annual meeting to review the terms of this Agreement, any applicable Operating Plans, and make necessary modifications.

"9.3 Amendments to this Agreement can be made by simple majority vote of the Members and will take effect immediately upon passage.

#### "Article X

"10.1 This Agreement shall continue in force on each Member until such Member takes action to withdraw therefrom. Such action shall not be effective until 60 days after notice thereof has been sent to all other Members.

#### "Article XI

"11.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall obligate the funds of any Member beyond those approved by appropriate legislative action."

#### SEC. 2. OTHER STATES.

Without further submission of the compact, the consent of Congress is given to any State to become a party to it in accordance with its terms.

#### SEC. 3. RIGHTS RESERVED.

The right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is expressly reserved.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the Senate bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I could almost place ditto marks over the remarks that I made in the previous bill that we have considered, because this, too, is a compact of special arrangements between two States or more in matters of mutual interest which must be approved by the Congress, as we have stated.

On this one, too, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DOC HASTINGS), our colleague, has been instrumental in driving it to this moment. This is the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement, which will help the States in that region respond more quickly and more efficiently to the wildfire syndrome about which we read and learn too much, it appears. But nevertheless, this goes a long way to prevention and to quick resolution of the disastrous consequences of such wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to concur that this is almost a ditto of the previous bill. This bill would grant the consent of Congress to the compact between the Northwestern States and the Canadian provinces to coordinate the response to forest fires and other emergencies. As we have indicated, these compacts have already been ratified by the affected States and provinces, but it is required to give the consent of Congress for this legislation to take effect, under the Compacts clause of the Constitution.

As has been indicated, we have bipartisan support of the members of the other body and of the States that are participating. Therefore, I would ask that our colleagues pass the Senate bill, S. 1134.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1134, a bill granting the consent and approval of Congress to an interstate forest fire protection compact entered into by the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, as well as the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, this bill fulfills the Constitutional requirement for Congressional consent to the compact negotiated by these eight states and provinces. Specifically, the compact enables the fire management agencies of the

participating states and provinces to cooperate in combating wildfires across state and national borders.

As the representative of a district that frequently experiences extensive and destructive wildfires, I am well aware of the need for regional cooperation in containing them. This compact will allow the region to mobilize all its available resources to combat wildfires and minimize their damage.

This locally driven legislation was passed unanimously by the other body on July 31 of this year, and has strong bi-partisan support from the northwest congressional delegation.

I urge my colleagues to support this cooperative effort to suppress wildfires in the northwest and pass this bi-partisan legislation.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1134.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof), the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING MURDER OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 597) expressing the sense of the House with respect to the brutal killing of Mr. Matthew Shepard.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 597

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House that—

(1) Mr. Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, was physically beaten and tortured, tied to a wooden fence and left for dead;

(2) Mr. Matthew Shepard died as a result of his injuries on October 12, 1998, in a Colorado hospital surrounded by his loving family and friends; and

(3) the House—

(A) condemns the actions which occurred in Laramie, Wyoming, as unacceptable and outrageous;

(B) urges each Member of Congress and every citizen of the United States, in his or her own way, through his or her church, synagogue, mosque, workplace, or social organization, to join in denouncing and encouraging others to denounce this outrageous murder of another human being;

(C) pledges to join in efforts to bring an end to such crimes, and to encourage all Americans to dedicate themselves to ending violence in the United States; and

(D) pledges to do everything in its power to fight the sort of prejudice and intolerance that leads to the murder of innocent people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).